

My Husband (Real!)

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My Husband (Real!)

by [OBLVN](#)

Summary

Upon tangling himself up in a lie, CEO Dream has to find a way to convince other guests at a big gala that he is in fact married, when he's actually not. One of his interns, George, just happens to be a perfect real life reflection of how he had described his husband to colleagues and employees. He just needs him to act like his spouse for one night.

Notes

it's the August fic exchange! :D

I got assigned the wonderful atlas (atlastitfalls) to write a fic for, and I've decided to split it in into two chapters. Second chapter will be out soon, probably within like a week :)

For this first part;
Enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

For One Night

Many mistakes pave the road to success. Dream has known this for as long as he can remember. As the local paperboy at age sixteen, he more than once didn't bring enough papers to deliver to every house. Working retail at nineteen, he was notorious for handing the customer a wrong amount of change. Curse his counting skills. During his internship at the company he started for at twenty-two, he spilled coffee over his supervisor's shirt and had to take it to dry-cleaning for him, only to bring back the wrong one. He always managed to solve them, he got away with a little *too* much shit in comparison others, but he made it work.

Now, CEO of his very own company started a mere two years ago, chief above all chiefs, all strings his to pull on, he might have made the worst mistake to date, one he can't fix as easily as the others. No, he hasn't made a bad business deal. He hasn't lost millions of dollars, he hasn't sent his company head first into the abyss by talking to the wrong people, investing in the wrong ideas. It's his problem, and his alone.

He has been talking about his marriage. About his handsome husband, their loyal golden retriever, their spacious backyard where they like to spend sunny weekends getting tan and reading magazines about other people's domestic lives. Not on his own accord, but to fit in. Because when all of your married employees talk about family life, and they pull you into the conversation, you have to act along. With all of them playing their part in modern day society, wife, husband, kids, pet hamsters, he can't stay behind.

The problem? The fact that said husband doesn't exist.

Come on, anyone in his position would have done the same. How convincing would he be, explaining his mansion is only occupied by himself and a lady from housekeeping? They'd think he's pathetic for spending all his time and all his money on himself, never finding a love interest to share his success with. And before any gold diggers can start ringing his doorbell after finding out he's single, he needs to put up a shield. A human shield. Of a husband that doesn't exist. *Fuck.*

Any of this could've gone perfectly fine. Living with a lie as little as *'I got married two years ago and we haven't spent a night apart since'* isn't that hard, nobody visits him, nobody could find out. It is only now that he's staring at the envelope on his desk from the Association of US Executives, that his lie is catching up to him.

'Dear Mr. Taken,' the letter starts. *'The Association of US Executives would like invite you to the World Entrepreneurship Gala, held on the evening of August 14, 2021.'*

So far, so good, you'd say. But things take a turn for the worst, further along the letter.

'The board has been in deliberation about the event for the past months, and has decided to host this year's edition in a different manner compared to previous years. With the recent falling ill of our chairman's wife, he would like to encourage all recipients of this invitation to bring their partners/spouses to the gala.'

There it is.

'It is by no means a requirement for attendance, but we would like to offer all of our members a chance to introduce their families to each other by request of Mr. and Mrs. Oakland. We hope to welcome you together at the Miami Beach Convention Center for an evening of celebrating love in all its forms.'

There would be a simple solution to this problem. His husband could be on a business trip of his own, far out of town, no chance to get back in time to attend the gala as requested. Sad, sure, but that's what happens when two company officials marry each other, isn't it? There is one issue keeping Dream in a headlock, however.

It's been an ongoing negotiation, Dream trying to get in touch with Mr. Welkin, another company's CEO to make a deal. He's walked into a wall of administrators, accountants, department heads, all sending him from pillar to post, getting nowhere near where he wants to be. He could wait it out patiently, urge the service desk lady to book him a proper appointment with the big boss, but he's not one to wait for things to decide on their own accord they should be in his favour.

The association's member list, more specifically the list of board members running the whole ordeal, offers him some new insights. His name in cursive, right below the chairman, Mr. Welkin pridefully holds his position in the group of executives. Married, two kids, there is no other choice than for him to be present at the event, bringing his wife along with him.

But, Dream knows if he shows up to this event alone, forcing himself onto the poor man trying to have a fun evening, he can wave goodbye to the deal he so desperately wants. He needs to sneak in. He needs to slither his business talk into friendly conversation, but how serious would a man like Mr. Welkin take the young puppy in the industry? He needs something relatable, he needs to play in on his feelings. He needs a husband, and quick.

He stares at the letter, words dancing in front of him in silent taunt, mockery for his lies. Karma, if you will. No husband, no further negotiations for another while. The repercussions of his twist in reality that, mind you, never even hurt anyone. He may have lied, but the only one finding trouble with it now, is himself. There is only one option left.

Have someone pretend to be his husband.

Is it morally correct? Maybe not. Is it what he needs to boost his company's success to a point where his pension will be secured, and he can retire at early age to spend the rest of his days by his own pool solving crossword puzzles without a worry on his mind? Definitely.

He sighs deeply once, sips from his coffee, sighs again and takes the letter into his hands. *How to go about this? How to find a fake husband?* He could hire someone, but if he hires the wrong person, he could be exposed and watch the big bags of money drift away right in front of his very eyes. He needs someone that won't snitch out on him, that won't care about how wrong it might or might not be to use someone to guarantee that finalising handshake with Mr. Welkin.

And as if the gods have heard his silent contemplation, there's a small knock on the door, before it carefully opens up.

"Sorry to bother, Mr. Taken, but Jane sent me in to hand you these." The man holds up a folder, papers sticking out clumsily, edges folded, and Dream rakes his eyes over it, before finding the intern's own eyes to look into.

"Jane got too lazy to walk across the hall and give me them herself?" He questions, quirked an eyebrow. The other shrugs indifferently as he steps closer and reaches out his arm to hand Dream the documents.

"Probably just thinks it's funny to let the intern do her chores," he says as Dream takes the papers from his hand.

"I'll reprimand her for it, you're here to learn, not to be the ball boy. She's perfectly capable of

bringing me this shit herself,” Dream utters, flicking through the pages. When he lifts his head back up, he finds the other with gaze stuck to his face, eyes focussed on the lower part of his features. “Unless you enjoy getting sent here every other hour,” he adds, pulling the smallest of smirks onto his lips. *Nothing quite like teasing an intern, that he’ll give Jane.*

His eyes shoot back up, but his skin doesn’t redden into the blush Dream had hoped to see. His dark brown eyes don’t give away much of his thinking process, either. *A tough one to crack.* “Good for my step count,” he quips, and the smile on Dream’s lips tugs wider.

“Sure, George,” he answers, gaining a smile in return. “Thanks, I’ll look over these,” he adds as he holds up the folder. The intern nods in return, before he turns on his heels and walks out the room, only looking back over his shoulder when he closes the door behind him.

At least there’s some people keeping fun alive in this place.

On his walk during lunch, he thinks it over again. Coffee in his hand is of no solace, it just gets sipped away while it’s still hot, almost hot enough to burn the roof of his mouth if he let it.

There’s no other way around it; he either needs to bail out of the event, wait out his chances for a better opportunity, or he needs to find someone to act like his husband. *Did he ever describe what his supposed spouse looks like?*

Ah, another obstacle. Find someone who fits the following criteria: shorter than him, dark hair and dark eyes. That’s not impossible by any means, but it makes the option of just choosing someone at random non-existent. What else did he make up about his husband?

He loves dogs. Also cats, but mostly dogs. A friendly person, always joking about but still able to get serious when he’s needed to be. Of course he’s the funniest person Dream has ever met, while also the most emotionally committed. He’s not afraid of many things, but he asks Dream to kill the spiders and go down the stairs first if the lights aren’t on. He might as well start making a list of traits that his actor will need to behave accordingly to.

Turning a corner in the park, he’s faced with a labradoodle stopping in its tracks, tilting its head at him. He blinks once, twice, and looks up to see its owner too busy on his phone to pay attention to him. *Too light hair, wrong type of dog. Uninterested in nature. No potential candidate.*

He stops his own thought process as soon as he realises he’s judging whether this *complete stranger* in the park could pretend to be his husband for one night. The coffee is finished, cup thrown into a trash bin along the path, and he starts his trek back.

Thinking back to earlier that day, he recalls the papers he looked over as a distraction for himself. Anything is better than to go over the same issue for several hours a day until his brain turns to mush inside his skull. There are more important matters at hand, like the financial administrations that seem to be out of order. Someone is bound to get into trouble for it, once he figures out who fucked it up.

Lost in thought about the documents, he walks along, the sound of his shoes tapping on the asphalted track sounding through his head as well. Dogs bark in the distance, people chatter friendly, and he returns to the office without feeling very refreshed at all. Maybe he should get

some iced coffee instead, next time.

His office waits at the end of the first floor hallway like it always does, but right as he's bound for entrance, walking one straight line towards the door, the intern pops out of a side room again. They both halt just in time not to bump into each other, but George is startled nevertheless, dropping the documents he was holding in his arms.

"Am I that scary?" Dream asks as George looks over the littered papers on the ground, sighing deeply before he kneels down to gather them.

"Incredibly, I guess the rumours are true," George notes back. It causes for Dream's eyes to squint, stuffing his hands into his pockets as the intern looks up from his kneeled position.

"Rumours?"

George pulls a smirk onto his lips, and it's the hint Dream needs to realise he's playing a joke on him. It doesn't usually work, his employees don't catch him in a gaff very often, but the intern has managed it. "Stuff of nightmares, that's what they call you," George answers mischievously. Dream rolls his eyes in return.

"Like I'm not the one paying these people," he remarks. George lifts himself back to his feet, papers in his arms again like a high schooler carrying the books too heavy for his backpack. He shrugs, smile still present.

"I don't know either," he says, and something about the glint in his eyes catches Dream's attention. *Friendly, joking, serious when needed.*

He gazes down George's face, the rest of his body following, landing on his polished shoes, before his eyes shoot back up to the chocolate ones inspecting him. *Shorter than him. Dark hair, dark eyes.*

"Follow me for a second," Dream says, weaving around George to get to his office. Footsteps trail behind as he unlocks the door, steps in, and gestures for George to enter as well. The lights flick on automatically, and Dream is quick to close the door again. He strides over to his desk, leaning against it with his tailbone as George stands in front of him, some nerves now apparently present in his face and spottable in the way his fingers fumble with the folder he's holding. Dream crosses his arms in front of his chest as he inspects the intern.

"Did you hear I'm married, George?" The question clearly catches him by surprise, eyes getting a little wider before he recollects himself. He shifts on his feet uncomfortably while Dream holds intent eye contact with him.

"I'm aware, yes," he answers in a more cool manner than would probably be accurate for how he feels. Like a poor little deer in headlights. Something inside of Dream tells him to stop, don't take the conversation in the direction he intends on taking it, but he ignores the yells.

"And did you know I got invited to the World Entrepreneurship Gala? Me *and* my husband," he says, tilting his head sideways a little.

"No, I didn't know," George answers. If Dream is not mistaken, he could almost hear the smallest quiver in George's voice. His face screams '*busted!*' in some sort of way. *He's flustering the intern.*

"I plan on going," he says. The intent of the statement seems vague, George not knowing exactly how to react to it, judging by his questioning eyes. "I just have one problem."

“What’s, uh... what’s the problem?” George dares ask.

“Can you keep a secret? Even if you can’t help with the problem?” Dream asks in return. George nods carefully, papers clutched to his chest now.

“I don’t think I’d be an intern here for long anymore if I leaked your secrets,” George answers with a scoff. Dream’s mouth curls into a small smile before he nods and clicks his tongue against the roof of his mouth.

“Hm, true,” he answers. He tilts his head to the other side, constantly holding George’s gaze captive. He doesn’t look away like most nervous interns do. Maybe because he’s a little older than most interns, or he’s just really good at keeping a poker face. Dream hasn’t caught him slipping up much yet, showing emotions he wouldn’t want to show. “My problem is that everyone knows I’m married,” he then says.

George looks back at him quizzically, trying to pull a further statement out of him. “And that’s a problem, because...?” He inquires, urging Dream to continue.

“It’s a problem, because everyone now expects me to bring my husband to the gala.” It offers very little clarification, and George looks to be twisting his brain into impossible positions trying to figure out what Dream is trying to say. “The real problem,” he says, “is that my husband doesn’t exist.”

Gears appear to start turning in George’s head, his face twisting into something more like confusion at the statement. The grip on his folder loosens a little bit as he tilts his head sideways, like a lost child not understanding a difficult word yet. “Your husband doesn’t exist,” he parrots, and Dream nods.

“I don’t have a partner, let alone a spouse, but I told everyone I did, and now he’s expected to show up with me at the gala,” he elaborates, and the problem seems to click in George’s head, his mouth forming a little ‘o’.

“That indeed sounds like a problem,” George confirms, frown pulling on his eyebrows slightly. “What are you going to do?”

Teeth sink into Dream’s lower lip as he contemplates whether he should be straight forward and ask, or if he should drag out the story a little bit, before he decides on an in-between option. “See, I need to speak to someone at the gala, someone important, so I can’t just ditch,” he starts telling. “I could go alone, tell everyone my husband is on a business trip, but it makes me look less sympathetic.”

A sharp remark seems to lie on the tip of George’s tongue, but he holds it back, simply nodding along as he listens. “Or,” he continues, intensifying his stare into George’s eyes, “I could have someone come along and pretend to be my husband.”

George doesn’t seem shocked. Quite frankly, it was a bit of an obvious build-up, Dream would admit, so he isn’t surprised at the lack of reaction. George doesn’t jump the gun, instead questioning further. “How are you imagining that?”

“Someone would just come to the gala with me, make some friendly conversation with people, and stick by my side when I find who I’ve come for,” Dream explains the plan he makes up on the spot. “No obligations, no public displays of affection other than maybe holding hands or something, just a night out with free drinks and pretending nothing happened the next day.”

George nods along, lowering the papers from his chest. “And why are you discussing this with me?” He asks, *as if it isn’t obvious*.

“Don’t take this as me flirting with you, because I’m not,” Dream warns, pointing a semi-accusatory finger in the intern’s direction. Something mischievous flashes in the smile that pulls on George’s mouth (that makes something in Dream ask himself if he really isn’t flirting with him, but he dismisses the thought). “But you look like what I described my supposed husband looks like, so if you’re free on the night of August fourteenth, I’d like to ask you to be my pretend-husband for a night.”

“What an honour,” George smirks, his stance quickly becoming more confident. Dream isn’t sure if he’s glad he asked, or if he’s already starting to heavily regret it. He simply sighs, rubbing his forehead.

“You can think about it if you need, just let me know by the end of the week, please,” he says, dropping his hands into his lap.

“Oh, I don’t need to think about it,” George answers immediately. There’s no clarity on which answer he is about to give, but Dream fears the worst if he’s this fast with it. He surprises, though. “I’ll do it.”

Dream’s eyebrows tug into a frown at the confirmation, looking at George questioningly. “You will?”

“Yeah, sounds like fun, and maybe I’ll learn a thing or two about networking and stuff while I’m there,” he answers, more nonchalantly this time.

“Okay, uh, I’ll email you the details then,” Dream says, not quite believing yet how easy it was to find someone willing to do it.

“Alright!” George sounds cheerier than normal when he agrees, and without another word, he turns to leave the office. In the same manner he did that morning, he looks over his shoulder as he closes the door, this time smirking right at Dream. He can’t quite pinpoint what it makes him feel and most of all, *why it makes him feel anything in the first place*, but he ignores the twist in his chest as the door gets pulled closed.

That easy, he thinks still as he returns to his chair to resume his own work.

The plan had been well thought out over the two weeks that followed. They picked out suits to wear with matching details, no expense had been spared in regards to the fancy car that would be bringing them there, and Dream had brought George up to date on how he had described his husband to be like. George had very little difficulty portraying the man Dream needed by his side, and it may have gotten him to wonder if he was naturally the type of person Dream usually finds himself attracted to, or if he’s just a *really* great actor. It’s a question he’s been choosing to ignore, though.

Now, sitting in the parked car, going over things one last time, it’s Dream who’s gotten the nerves coursing through his body. George seems unfazed, still enthusiasm on his features, ready as he’ll ever be to go inside and bluff them through the night.

“Stick to what I’ve told you,” Dream reiterates. He’s only granted a bored nod, before George just leaves the car, giving them no further time to talk. He quickly climbs out after, watching George fix his suit as he locks the Mercedes definitively.

“You should worry a little less,” George notes, walking up besides him, looking up into his eyes with a little too of a convincing lovestruck look in his own. His hands lift to fix Dream’s tie, then pressing his palm flat against the fabric to iron it down. “You never know who’s already watching,” he says, quieter, and Dream simply nods.

His hand plants itself firmly on George’s lower back as he turns his body towards the exit of the underground parking lot, a silent request to get walking. It stays there right until they get to the ballroom entrance, where a security person checks their IDs. He looks to hesitate as he inspects George’s, and the nerves return inside of Dream’s gut like a wave the size of a tsunami washes over it and brings them all to shore at once.

“All good,” he then finally says, handing the card back and stepping out the way to let them pass through.

Entering the large room brings a new type of tickles to Dream’s stomach. Yes, he’s been to conventions before, and yes, he’s seen most of these people before, but the sheer amount of genuinely happy couples gives him the shakes. George grabs onto his arm reassuringly, taking the lead in walking them into the room, finding them both a glass of wine.

“Tell me about what you do,” George inquires, grabbing Dream’s attention from where it had been focussed on the many people finding each other for conversation. Mr. Welkin is nowhere to be seen still.

“What?” Dream asks.

“Talk, have a conversation with me,” George says, and the confusion must be clear on his face because George sighs and tugs on his sleeve, bringing him closer. “Your face looks like you’ve been constipated for the past three days, relax, just talk about something you like to me and that guy you need to talk to will show up eventually.”

“Oh,” Dream answers intelligently, not quite sure whether to take the advice, or tell George off for saying he looks like he needs to take a shit. He decides this might not be the place to make a fuss. “Okay, well, uh... I reeled in a big customer the other day,” he starts telling, and George nods along.

His pretend-husband listens closely to every word he says, chiming in every once in a while to ask something, or to offer input, almost like a real spouse would. The act is oddly convincing, and if it hadn’t been premeditated, if George wasn’t sticking to rules they made up, Dream would argue the sparkle in his eyes could as well be genuine. It’s not, though, he knows it’s not.

The conversation comes to a halt when another guest couple approaches them, a familiar face from a previous convention and his wife. Quick introductions, some sips of wine, and some friendlier conversation about life at home later, Dream is pulled to the side for some business talk.

Anyone who overheard the conversation would probably have gotten bored within fifteen seconds, but Dream can’t deny the passion he feels for the job, for his own company. Even if it’s about finances, or company regulations, procedures within different departments, he could completely engulf himself in the information, get lost in what he talks about. All these like-minded people in one room with him, it gets more comfortable, especially when others start joining in and share his enthusiasm with bulky laughter and shoulder slaps.

He's halfway through a sentence when he hears George's voice from somewhere across the room, exclaiming a giggly, "no way!" When he looks over and scans the room, he finds the shorter making conversation with some smiley women, some he recognises as company chairwomen, others he concludes to be plus one's. His laughter gets louder before he glances over his shoulder, sending a wink Dream's way.

"Uh, excuse me for just a moment," he cuts into the talk the others and him were having, his eyes not leaving George as he turns back to the women. With quick strides and nervous nausea, he makes his way across the room, landing a tender hand on George's shoulder when he appears by his side.

"Oh, hey," George says happily, and his arm slithers around Dream's waist to pull him closer. Cranking up the act a notch, his other hand perches on Dream's chest, and his head leans into Dream's shoulder, smiling all the while.

"What are you up to?" Dream asks. The suspicion in his voice is probably only noticeable to George, who decides to just giggle it off.

"George was just telling us about your renovation plans!" Someone Dream vaguely recognises from an online meeting a month or so ago chimes in, swishing a drink in her hand.

"Oh, hah, yeah, got some, uh... some plans in the works, yeah," he answers. His hand slides down from George's shoulder to his waist, squeezing softly and hoping that George will take the hint to take over the conversation, since he has *not a goddamn clue* what renovation plans he's supposed to have.

"What's that company again that's placing the isolation?" George inquires, tapping his hand on Dream's chest shortly. "I forgot the name, they did the whole noise testing thing? To see what type of panels they were gonna use?"

Isolation? Noise test?

"I uh— I don't remember, I'd have to look it up at home," Dream makes up, furrowing his brows.

"Anyway, they were really thorough with it," George continues. "They put like a boombox in the room and would measure how bad the noise was in different rooms, and how it sounded through the outside walls and stuff, it got some very interesting results."

"Oh yeah? What'd they find?" Some other lady in a dark blue knee-dress asks. The hand around Dream's waist pinches softly through the fabric, and judging by the up-to-no-good smile on George's face, it's time to *panic*.

"Let's just say we should be glad we don't really have neighbours," he says, lifting the hand from Dream's chest to hold it by his own cheek, like a little shield to not let others in on the conversation. "Especially on the bedroom-side of the house, that might have been an awkward past few years," he whispers, sending the group of women into a giggle fit, and sending all of Dream's blood straight to his cheeks while cold sweat gathers on his back.

"Alright, I think— I think it's time to switch topics," Dream cuts in, louder than before to distract from the fact his face could be mistaken for a tomato at this point. George just laughs along, sounding like he's having the time of his life right now.

"I think it's time for another drink," George then says, smiling up just a little too sweetly. His eyes crinkle in a way that Dream would guess could be in apology, especially with the tilt of his head,

and his captivating stare. For just a moment, everyone else in the room disappears. Maybe a second, maybe less, it's just George staring up at him, his palm pressing warmth into his side still, almost burning through his shirt where it lies beneath his blazer.

Then, like it's the most normal thing in the world, George lifts himself on his toes and presses a short kiss to Dream's lips. His blood runs cold, freezing in his veins, turning him into a statue as George's hand disappears and he walks off to the bar to find them both a drink. *George just kissed him.*

"I understand now why you don't talk about him much," one of the women shakes him from his thoughts. He looks over, lips parted as he still tries to process the gesture. "He's quite the jewel, Mr. Taken, I might had just married him myself if you had told us more about him."

"Yeah," he laughs, uncommitted to the sound, "he's quite the jackpot, isn't he?" The room full of people feels less suffocating now, his face losing some of the heat it held.

"The way he talks about you, you can just tell the two of you have so much love to share," another cuts in. He has to blink a few times in a row before he finds the courage to close his smiling mouth and swallow the surprise away.

"Oh yeah? What did he say?" Curiosity blooms in his mind, getting his attention fully back on the ladies gathered around him.

"Just all these little details that people don't usually bother to remember, I wish John knew my coffee order by heart like that," the lady who spoke to him first says. "I doubt he even knows my favourite colour, let alone what my perfume smells like— or cologne, in your case." *George remembers what his cologne smells like?*

"He uh... he pays attention, yeah," he answers hesitantly.

"You've really got something here, don't let that boy go," she says, and he nods quickly in her direction, before George's voice calls his attention again. Or, more so, his laugh. He whips his head towards the bar, but George is no longer there. When he twists his head further, he sees him standing with his back in Dream's direction, talking to...

Oh God.

"So sorry, I'll be just a second," he excuses himself, before he turns around, and makes a beeline for where George is stood talking. He tries not to look too hurried, but there's really no time to waste. Only when George's conversation partner spots him, he slows his step and tries to relax his face into a smile.

"Mr. Welkin! A pleasure to meet you," he says as he steps next to George, extending his hand.

"Mr. Taken, the pleasure is all mine," Mr. Welkins answers with a nod, placing a firm grip on Dream's palm and shaking. Next to him appears a woman, about the same age, pearls decorating her neck above a broken-white coloured dress. *His wife.*

"And of course Mrs. Welkin, may I say you look beautiful tonight," Dream adds as he takes her hand, shaking a little softer as she laughs.

"Thank you, dear," she says, before Mr. Welkin clears his throat.

"Your husband was just telling me about your wishes for the future," he says, and Dream slowly shakes his head up and down, placing his hand on George's lower back again, where it seems to

have found a new favourite spot to rest. George turns his head and looks up at him, corners of his mouth turned upwards. It seems to already scream somewhat of an apology, which is alarming, to say the least.

“Wishes for the future?” He questions, looking back over at Mr. Welkin.

“We know how difficult the adoption process is,” he says.

The *what?*

“We had to wait five years before we could adopt, you’re good in trying so young still, it really gives you more chances,” Mrs. Welkin says, clutching her hands in front of her chest.

“It’s entirely worth the wait, though, I’ll tell you that much. When they place that baby in your arms and that day suddenly turns you into a parent, life feels...” he falters, looking over his wife. He smiles and grabs her hand. She smiles back, almost teary-eyed. “Complete. Life feels complete.”

George told them they want to adopt a child. *George told them they want to adopt a child.*

“We’re also waiting for options regarding a surrogate, but we want to take the first opportunity we can get, you know?” George says, receiving a hard squeeze where Dream has moved his hand to his side, as if to say *‘quit it now, before I decide to fire you’*.

“Both wonderful, truly,” Mrs. Welkin says. She looks so moved by the conversation, so reminiscent, and Dream feels *wrong*.

“You get to try and change the world for the better, you know?” Mr. Welkin then says, pinching his eyebrows together, conveying how strongly he must feel about the subject. “We can donate money, we can work environmentally friendly, but it’s what we do for the present, isn’t it? Who’s to say the future generations will do even better, if we don’t raise them to?”

“We get to teach them, so when they’re the ones making the decisions, we know they’ll make the right ones,” George adds, and there’s nausea starting to stir Dream’s stomach. Both Mr. and Mrs. Welkin nod at him with kind smiles, before they look over at each other, and one more sentence out of their mouth might send Dream on a race to the toilet.

“Say, Mr. Taken, George also told me how you’ve walked into issues trying to contact me,” Mr. Welkin then says. Dream looks at him with wide eyes, pressing his lips into a thin line while his fingertips dig harshly into the fabric of George’s blazer. Telling them they want a kid is one, but talking to him about the harsh words he’s strewn around regarding Mr. Welkin’s administration is a whole new level of fucked up. Is he trying to ruin him? Is this a game to him?

“Oh, it’s nothing big, I’ve been trying to book an appointment with you but ehm... yeah, I didn’t get very far past talking to someone from the service desk,” Dream tries to play it down as. He does everything in his power to leave out the curse words he used to describe said person from the service desk.

“I apologise for the inconvenience, we’ve been training new staff, the system software was running buggy, we’ve trying to get it back on the rails,” he says. *Oh*. His hand reaches out to lay on Dream’s shoulder, smiling in sorry. “If you’ve got no other commitments right now, I’m happy to talk business with you.”

If there was a drink in Dream’s mouth, he would have spat it out. Instead, he tries to hide the fact he’s choking on his spit by coughing into his fist quickly, George’s hand patting his back softly.

“No! I mean, yes, I mean... let’s, yeah, let’s talk,” he stutters out, and Mr. Welkin slaps his shoulder quickly with a bouldering laugh.

“Come on, son, let’s find some privacy,” he says, pulling on Dream’s arm, sending him forward. Before they get the chance to leave the room, he looks back at a widely smiling George, who sticks up his thumbs as soon as he notices. Wide eyes and jaw dropped, Dream turns back, walking along with Mr. Welkin, who has started some new story about the software they use, and how it’s been lacking.

George did it. He actually did it.

“I’m sorry! I really am, I thought it’d help!” George sputters out the words as he backs into the room, Dream’s figure looming in the doorway. As soon as he returned from his talk with Mr. Welkin, Dream had grabbed George by the arm and guided him towards another room inside the convention centre, urging him to enter with wide eyes.

“I swear it was with good intentions, they totally bought it! Everyone loves adoption stories, it was meant well,” he rambles on, keeping eye contact still. It’s a thing that stands out about George; he never breaks eye contact, no matter how nervous or scared he gets. He keeps looking at you with those coffee eyes, demanding your attention to be on him at all times.

“You remembered my coffee order,” Dream says monotonously as he closes the door and flicks on the awfully unflattering TL lights.

“Uh, yes?” George says, more like a question than an actual answer. “I’m usually the one getting it for you.”

“And you can describe what the cologne I wear smells like, in detail,” Dream continues, and George nods with wide eyes.

“It smells good,” he says quietly, almost like a whimper.

“You insinuated things about our sex life,” Dream says darkly.

“To make them laugh, people like you more if you can laugh along with them about something embarrassing,” he explains. His hands grab onto the ends of his own sleeves, fumbling with the fabric.

“And you told the man I need to make the biggest deal of my entire *career* with, about our supposed wish for children,” he says lastly.

“I’m sorry, it was unprofessional, but I thought you’d look more sympathetic.” His eyes are kind of sad, and for the first time, he drops his gaze to the ground below them. Dream won’t allow it, though. He steps closer, and his hand gently grabs on George’s chin, tilting it up to force mingled gazes. Swirls of confusion dance in his irises as Dream stares down at him. “It worked, though, right? It worked?” He whispers.

“It fucking worked, George,” Dream says back in a hush. His eyes get wider and his jaw drops open slightly, as much as Dream’s hand will allow it to, and *fuck*, if he doesn’t take this chance. “It was...” he says, but falters.

“Was it okay?” George questions silently.

“It was fantastic,” Dream confirms, and without a second thought to spare, Dream dips down and slots their lips together. There’s nobody around to witness the act, nobody to convince of their undying love for each other. No suspicious eyes, no people who need to sympathise with them, just them in a room slightly larger than a broom closet kissing like they need to taste the remnants of wine on each other’s tongues.

Dream’s hand leaves George’s chin in favour of cupping his cheek, which heats up under his touch. In return, George’s arms snake over Dream’s shoulders, hooking around his neck to keep him as close as possible. Mouths open just that little bit more, no force behind either, no taking leads, more like a natural progression.

In that same natural course, their bodies slowly move against each other. George’s back hits the wall, and with that, chest hits to chest, pressing harder, pressing rougher. Tongues swipe against lips, and tongues swipe against tongues, silently agreeing on where to go, and how fast to go there. George gasps into the kiss when Dream’s knee works itself between his thighs, spreading them apart.

“Dream,” George whispers, trying to catch as much air as he can while their lips are disconnected.

“Huh?” Dream breathes out. He takes a few inches distance to look over George’s dazed eyes and numb-kissed lips.

“Don’t I get a ‘thank you’?” George smiles as he breathes heavily, and moves his hips to carefully rub himself against Dream’s thigh. One corner of Dream’s mouth curls up into a smirk, before he gazes down.

“I’d rather show you my thanks, if that’s alright with you,” he answers. His eyes meet George’s again, greeted with fast nodding of approval. And while George worries his lower lip between his teeth, Dream drops himself to his knees, letting their eyes stay locked while he unbuckles the leather in front of him.

He tugs on the pants, working them down past George thighs, before his hands hook into the waistband of George’s bulging boxers. One more nod from above, and they’re yanked down as well, revealing the half-hard erection George had been hiding behind the fabric of the dress pants. “Stay quiet,” Dream whispers as he lays his cheek to George’s thigh, and rests his hand and the base of his cock.

“I can— I can do that, yeah,” George whispers back, but it may have been a little too early of a promise when an immediate whimper pushes through his throat as Dream’s hand starts stroking.

“Quiet, sweetheart,” Dream reiterates before retracting his hand momentarily. He gather as much spit in his mouth as he can before dripping it into his palm, and bringing it back to George’s length. Whether it was the pet name or the new wetness cooling down on his skin, George shivers and releases a shaky breath.

“Quiet,” he parrots with a nod. His eyes screw closed and he lets his head rest on the wall he’s still leaning against, Dream’s hand working a slow and steady pace up and down his cock, letting it get harder before he decides on a different approach.

When George has gotten fully hard, whimpers and breaths that would rather be moans falling across his lips, Dream rests his hand at the base again. It grabs George’s attention, making him look down just in time to see Dream’s mouth approaching him, eyes looking up through his lashes.

“Fuck,” George whispers in response, and Dream can hear the breath getting caught in his throat as

his lips plant themselves on the tip. It's just a kiss to start with, little pecks placed all across the head, and further down the length, before his tongue gets involved. Kitten licks all over the sensitive skin, making George whine as silently as he can muster. His hands curls into fists by his side, pressing against the wall as he arches his back to bring his crotch closer to Dream's face.

Then, without much of a prior warning, Dream spreads his lips further and sucks George's tip into his mouth, tasting the sweetness of the precum beading at the slit. No reconsideration, he presses his tongue into the crevice, letting George choke on a moan as his fist bangs against the wall. He'd tell him off, make him shut up somehow, but the effect is too beautiful to bring to a stop.

Dream leaves the slit to rest, instead circling his tongue around, leaving spit in its trail. It gathers at his lips when he tightens them and pushes down, engulfing the entire head in the warmth of his mouth. "God, *fuck*—," George breathes, and the fists untangle, only to be reconstructed with Dream's hair in between them. There's no pull or push, no force, maybe just the way of George finding stability. It sends vibration up through Dream's throat, making George exhale heavily, leaving his lungs entirely empty for as long as he can hold.

A strangled sound leaves him when Dream's mouth sinks down further, taking half of his cock in while hollowing his cheeks. It may not be the 'thanks' either of them had expected if the night went well, but it sure feels like the proper one. No, Dream hadn't been planning to take it as far, of course he hadn't, it's still his *intern*, but there's a certain fondness in knowing the things George remembers about him, and the way he kissed him in front of all those people.

He sinks down as far as he can manage, making George's hands tighten as he stays as quiet as possible, only heavy breaths filling the heating room. When Dream is done testing the waters, he starts pulling off, almost dragging off entirely, but he decides against it. Instead, he sinks down again, only slightly faster than the first time, but enough to make George's body react as intended. He writhes, and Dream can tell he's holding back the urge to buck forward.

With every drag up and down, he gains some speed, bobbing his head with a quicker pace while he works his tongue around against the length. It swipes across the head, before it moves right under it, and George can no longer hold back the moan that's been sitting at his vocal cords. And any other day, they would have probably gotten away with the sound, but it's just their luck that it draws attention this time.

The door creaks open, natural light spilling into the room as a voice calls, "hello?"

Dream immediately takes his mouth off and jumps to his feet to protect George's vulnerable state from being seen by whoever decided to throw open the door, placing his hands on either side of George's head to cage him in. The voice was awfully familiar though, and Dream can only hope that it isn't who he thinks it is.

He looks down into George's fear-struck eyes. They're wide, and his hand is slapped in front of his mouth. With the way he looks up, Dream might as well confirm his suspicions by turning his head to glance over his shoulder.

And of fucking course.

"Ah, Mr. Welkin, would you, uh... would you mind granting us some privacy?" He asks shakily.

"Oh, yes! Yes, of course, don't let me ruin your... your celebration, I suppose?" He says, and Dream silently curses the man for not just turning around and leaving.

"Yeah, our celebration," he confirms, and he thinks he could cry.

“Don’t worry boys, I’ll leave you to it. There was a time, when I was your age, where I used to do things like this, there’s no shame to it.” *For the love of everything that’s good, please leave*, Dream thinks as he closes his eyes, head pointed down towards George. “Young, wild, and free, right? What I’d do to get back those times,” Mr. Welkin reminisces in the doorway.

“Uhu!” Dream agrees, trying to sound the least bit enthusiastic to appease the man he just made a deal of a lifetime with.

“Your secret is safe with me! I’ll cover for your absence,” he still adds. Dream scrunches up his face in psychological pain.

“Thanks, uh, bye,” he answers.

“Make the most of it!” Dream can hear the thumbs-up without needing to see it, before the door closes again, and they’re left alone with aching jaw and undressed bottom half. Dream shakes his head before he dares open his eyes again, finding George’s apologetic ones.

“We can, ehm... we can do this some other time, when we’re actually alone, if you’re still up to it after tonight,” Dream says, and some worry melts off the other’s face. His hand reaches up, cupping Dream’s jaw, before standing on his toes and kissing him.

“Yeah, he knows how to ruin a mood,” George answers when he releases Dream’s lips from his own, having gotten a proper chance to taste himself on Dream’s tongue.

“He sure fucking does,” Dream agrees, and there’s finally some giggles spilling into the room. “You were great tonight, I— I really appreciate it, George,” he says, and in response, George is pressing up against him once more, connecting their lips. It’s softer, warmer, genuine in its intent when he traces lines over Dream’s shoulder as he pulls back.

“Happy to help,” he whispers, before looking down. “Yeah, that’s— that’s gonna have to wait for another time,” he finally says, and Dream chuckles as he bends down to pull up George’s boxers and pants for him. The belt clasps back together, and Dream takes some distance to look over him.

“After all that, you still look great,” he says. George’s cheeks blossom with cherry with before he waves it off and starts walking towards the door, tugging Dream’s wrist with him along the way.

“Let’s just get out of here,” George dodges the comment, and beyond it all, beyond his instincts to lead, beyond his normal need for power and order and everything organised, Dream lets himself get dragged through the door.

Absurdity

Chapter Summary

The consequences of their pretend-marriage catch up to Dream and George, having to find a way to work this ordeal out properly.

Chapter Notes

Sorry it took me three months to update but life happened, I hope I get to write more because I really enjoyed this :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Silence reigns inside the office. Not too off from the usual affairs, only a phone ringing from a side room every once in a while, yet it still feels... *odd*. The people normally gathered at the coffee machine for a quick talk have already resided to their own rooms when Dream walks up to it. He finds the coffee inside the pot has already cooled too much to be enjoyable when he brings his cup to his mouth and winces at the bitterness.

He's just short of a groan when he puts the mug back down to start making his way over to his room, mood already spoiled, a little too early in the day for his liking. Some days, being annoyed is inevitable, but it'd be considerable of the universe to let that fate wait for him for a couple of hours to catch up, instead of already crashing down on him.

Lights are on in the hallways and rooms, but there's little of the buzz there is on other days of the week. Maybe because it's Monday, people still in a weekend-mindset, or actually recovering from the two free days they've just had to do what they want. It doesn't really matter. The only thing that matters right now, for Dream, is to find George and have a talk about... *whatever* it is that happened at the gala, Saturday night.

Sunday was all his to think it over. Because no matter how long he's spent denying anything for himself in the weeks leading up to the event, this weekend threw all of those thoughts into the bin. He'd try and fish them out again, put them back in the place they were and pretend they never left, but it seems like the garbage truck already took everything out of his reach, and he's left with the bitter remnants of a fallen mask.

Everything started exactly according to plan. George was his perfect arm piece, the charming husband that got the desired attention they needed—that *Dream* needed. Guests ate it all up, they loved it, even, and maybe Dream hadn't felt fond of George's methods at first, he had to admit, they were the right ones.

What did not go according to plan, was reality. Its twisted roots caught up to him, the roots he had ignored as he focussed on figuring out this master plan of his. Yes, it was a scheme simply made up for the gala, it would have never existed if he never got that invitation, but denying a crucial part of his intentions? Not possible anymore.

He unlocks the door to his office, lights flicking on familiarly in TL light that only reminds him of another room now, one that shouldn't be as much inside his head anymore as it is.

Shorter than him, dark hair, dark eyes. Funny, serious when he's needed to be.

Bullshit.

His jacket folds over the backrest of his chair, bag falling to the ground to give himself a chance of rubbing his face with his hands. A black computer screen stares back before he gathers the motivation to turn it on, some generic background of a meadow in the sun appearing in front of him in all its pixelated glory. Whatever possessed the developers of *Windows* to add such basic backgrounds to the standard collection is beyond him, but then again, he never put in the effort to find another one that he actually likes. 1-0 for the developers, he guesses.

Black plastic doesn't creak when he perches onto the seat and leans back, silent huff escaping into the empty space. It takes a moment for the system to load completely, but when it does, his e-mail application already pings, alerting him of the incoming messages. A list of six new e-mails lines up on his screen, and *he needs some actual coffee to get through this, holy shit.*

With the quick press of a button on the phone, he gets connected to the next room. "Jen?" He queries as she picks up with a 'hello?'

"Good morning, how can I help you?" She answers politely.

"Could you get my coffee order in? Extra strong, please," he grumbles as he clicks open the first e-mail. Some reminder of an employee's contract information that's incomplete.

"Of course, anything else?" She says. He swears he can hear a snicker in the background, but it's gone before he can give it much more thought.

"No, that'll be it," he says. She answers affirmatively one more time before hanging up, and Dream navigates to the second e-mail. When he spots the sender, he doesn't know if he should jump up and do a little happy dance, or try to drown himself in his own shame. Mr. Welkin has sent him a list of dates to pick from to organise a follow-up meeting regarding their negotiations.

Yeah, that happened. He had only gotten a quick glance at the man in the doorway, and simply hoped he had turned around afterwards, not seeing too much of the two of them pressed up against the wall. It wasn't brought up when they reappeared in the ballroom, so there's little to worry about, but it still eats away at him just a smidge.

He quickly goes over all of the days in his schedule to check if he's occupied already, and settles on three possible days. As he types them into an answer, there's a knock on the door and Jen walks in with a sturdy carton cup releasing steam into the air.

Hold on.

"Got tired of bossing the intern around?" He notes as he takes the cup, quirking an eyebrow.

"I haven't seen him around yet, I figured I could ask you why he didn't come in," she replies, making no effort to leave just yet. *He didn't come in?*

"He's not here?" Dream then asks, and she shakes her head.

"I don't know if I would be, if I was in his shoes," she says casually, maybe even on the passive-aggressive side, leaning one hand on the desk. Fearful questioning starts bubbling in his stomach,

oesophagus tightening ever so slightly at her off answer.

“Jen, if you’ve got something to say to me, I advise you just say it,” he says. He makes sure to sound as stern as he can through the nerves rapidly gathering in his gut. Her face doesn’t display much of any emotion as she stares right back at him, almost through him.

“Are you messing around with the intern?” She asks, and the stomach that had just been twisting and turning suddenly *drops*.

“Excuse me?” He lifts his eyebrow as high as it will go as his jaw goes lax, Jen giving him a look as if to say ‘you heard me’.

“You were supposed to take your husband with you to the gala, weren’t you?” She asks, and he simply nods in return. “When I went on Instagram this morning, my timeline was suddenly swarmed with pictures of you at the gala, and not just you, but you and George, sneaking off to whoever knows where. People said you only returned like twenty minutes later.” The accusation isn’t blatant in words, she doesn’t dare straight up ask him, but the insinuation is clear as day.

“Pictures,” he stammers. It’s like his entire mind suddenly falls into chaos, trying to make sense of what Jen is telling him.

“If I was sleeping with a married man and saw those pictures of myself, I probably wouldn’t have the guts to come in anymore either,” she says, a little too sassy. The sudden, terrifying realisation that the entire world might know him and George snuck off at the gala to have sex hits him like a bat to the skull. The even worse realisation; George might feel the same. “The caption said he’s supposedly your husband, but all due respect, sir, I have a hard time believing that.”

“Oh fuck,” he curses as he grabs onto the edge of his desk, glancing over the e-mails. When he scans the fifth, he finds George as the sender, and he’s never clicked on a message faster. There’s only one sentence that fills it: ‘I resign.’

“God fucking damn it,” he says as he pushes himself up from his chair, harshly sending it back to collide with the wall.

“You should probably call your husband,” Jen says, and he meets the unsolicited advice with a harsh, judging stare.

“Get back to work, I will explain this later but right now I need to go somewhere,” he decides, grabbing his jacket from where it’s fallen to the ground. In a brilliant moment, he navigates towards personnel registration, and scans through the list of names and their matching addresses, until he finds George’s.

“I hope it’s a damn good explanation, because I doubt you’ll be receiving much more respect here if you’re exposed as a cheater,” she spits.

“I’m not a goddamn cheater,” he answers bitterly, grabbing his bag as well as soon as he’s pulled the coat over his shoulders. “And if I hear anyone suggest that I am, consequences will follow. I’m going to explain it, just take my word on this.” Jen seems unimpressed as she pushes herself up again, but nods. Before any more words are dirtied on it, she’s turned around and strides out of the room.

He’s never had more haste getting to his car than he has right now, and he’s never opened Instagram as quickly as he does once he perches into the driver’s seat. Sure enough, as soon as he taps to his explore page, pictures of himself dragging along George through the hallway pop up,

bright yellow letters slapped onto them.

'Million-dollar mystery marriage revealed'

'Young love in business?'

'The Golddigger nightmare scenario'

'Where's the ring, Mr. Taken?'

The fabric of his suit feels way too heavy on his skin, his tie constricting his throat, and he has to pry two fingers underneath to give his airway some space. The severity of the situation dawns on him and *fuck, what must George be thinking right now?*

He wastes no more time, tossing his phone to the passenger seat and buckling his seat belt, before starting the car and pulling out of his spot. No turn could be taken any sharper if he tried, and he toes the line of getting a speeding ticket as he steps on the gas, driving towards where he hopes to the heavens he will find George.

He'd do anything to speed up the drive, every second feeling like it's too long already, and every street looking like it goes on for miles. Looking back now that he finds himself having a little too much room for thought, he could have probably tried calling first, or at least send him a text, but then again, he might not have responded. Showing up at his apartment, there's little opportunity to be ignored. So maybe it was the right choice, after all. Only time will tell.

Time that's going way slower than it usually goes, in Dream's opinion. It's like the clock taunts him, in a way, or the speed limit is made specifically to slow him down. Maybe the ten minutes it takes to get to George's house is nothing in comparison to the entire weekend that just passed, but it sure feels like this timeframe is packed with more importance.

This neighbourhood is of no familiarity. It takes a little longer than Dream had hoped to find a parking spot, but when the vehicle is finally somewhat aligned with the other cars beside the road, he can jump out.

There happens to be just one apartment building down the street, undeniably George's. Dream knows better than to ring George's own doorbell, realising damn well George would simply keep him out, not open the door for him. So, he rings what he assumes to be his neighbour's.

"Hello?" An old lady's voice rings out through the intercom and Dream leans into the speaker.

"Hi, I'm visiting your neighbour, but I think his doorbell is broken, would you mind letting me in?" He says, and the answer lets itself be waited on for a couple of moments.

"Who is this?" She then asks, rather sceptically.

"My name's Dream, I'm from George's work," he answers truthfully.

"Oh! I've heard your name come by, I'll open the door," she says, and a wave of relief washes over him, followed immediately by a tinge of confusion over George's neighbour knowing who he is. He decides to make that a question to be answered at a later moment as he hears the buzz of the door opening.

Familiar like a cliché movie scene, the elevator is out of use when Dream could use it best, and he has no choice but to let the situation assess his stamina. He close to runs up the steps of the stairs, barely avoiding tripping over his own feet in his own haste, and by the time he's reached George's

floor, he has to heave to catch enough breath to keep standing up straight. He recomposes himself as he scans the door, soon spotting George's apartment number right above a doorbell.

He swallows once, twice, lifts his back straight, and swallows again, before stepping over to the door. All-disrupting nerves churn inside his stomach and his chest feels tight in anticipation when he lands his pointer finger on the button, and he hears the tune ring through the door. It opening up isn't announced by any footsteps, which makes Dream's startle a little worse than it could have been. The shock is quickly forgotten when he finds George looking up at him with wide eyes of surprise.

Dream opens his mouth to speak, but it's fruitless as George already makes a move to close the door again. "Wait!" He manages to blurt out still, and his foot shoots forward to block the attempt. George only answers with a groan and a kick to the toe of Dream's shoe, trying to nudge it away.

"Can we please talk? You're upset, and I—"

"You think?" Dream doesn't get to finish his sentence, George's anger breaking his speech. The door opens back up a little more, just enough to showcase George's enraged features, red and menacing. "*I am* upset, and you showing up uninvited is only making it worse right now."

"Let's just talk about it, I'm sure we can fix this, but resigning and never talking to me again isn't the way to do it," Dream offers, watching the flames in George's eyes blast at full ferocity.

"It's the way I prefer to do it, so if you'll excuse me, I have job applications to fill in," he answers, and the door lands against Dream's foot again.

"I'm not leaving until we talk, George, this stuff affects me too, you know," Dream says. The sound of another door opening up grabs his attention, an old lady stepping out of her apartment to peer down the hall.

"What's all this fuss about?" She questions, eyes dropping from Dream's face to where his foot is lodged between the door and the doorframe. He recognises her voice as the one that talked to him through the intercom downstairs. George opens the door back up to peak around, before clenching his jaw and looking back over to Dream.

"Nothing, Mrs. Reynolds, don't worry about it," he utters from gritted teeth.

"I'd hate to report nuisance to the board of residents," she chimes. George looks like a bull that got a red rag waved in front of his face, pushing a heavy breath past his nostrils.

"No need, we'll resolve this inside." The reluctance shows as he opens the door wider, and Dream waits a few seconds before stepping in. George seems to make an effort to not slam the door, closing it carefully as he holds a white-knuckled grip on the knob. He doesn't turn to Dream at first, just holding onto the metal, staring at the door in silence.

"I like your carpet," Dream says quietly. It makes George whip his head around, eyebrows pointing down in an angered frown.

"The only reason you're inside of here is because that old witch has no other enjoyment than making noise complaints," he grumbles. He turns completely, letting go of the knob to stalk past Dream into his living room, Dream following close behind. His hands hang limp beside him as he looks over the room, rather bare but providing the necessities.

"You don't have anything on your walls," Dream points out, as if George doesn't know already.

"I'm not talking to you about my walls," George notes back as he sits down.

"So we can talk about what happened." Dream would be lying if he said he wasn't proud of that conversation twist.

"Absolutely not, you're going to be quiet for ten minutes and then leave without making any more of a scene," George answers. He sinks further into the dark grey couch, grabbing his phone, before seemingly seeing something he doesn't like and tossing it next to him with a small grunt.

"Look, George, I'm sorry. I never imagined it could get out of hand like this, you know I wouldn't put that on you." Dream decides to try.

"Oh, do I?" George quips back, forgotten about his apparent resolution to ignore it all and just hide from the world, and the conversation. "Do I know? Really? Because I feel like I don't know you at all, and the consequences of your little idea are suddenly mine to deal with."

Dream tilts his head to the side a little, inspecting the hurt that runs over George's features.

"Don't you think I would have ignored your e-mail and gone about my day as normal if I wanted it to be just yours to deal with?" George doesn't seem to have an answer to that, plainly staring into Dream's eyes. He can't quite decipher if George wants to say something back, or if he's waiting for him to continue.

"I could have made any kind of statement, put in a lot of money to sweep my part under the rug, but my first instinct was to come and see if you were doing alright." Malice lacks, it's not a statement to talk guilt into George, even though it seems to flash inside his eyes for just a millisecond.

"I'm fine," George mutters quietly, crossing his arms in front of his chest.

"I don't think you are," Dream answers. He makes a move to tentatively sit down beside the other on the couch. He isn't immediately pushed away, which he takes as a good sign. With his elbows leaning on his knees, he turns his head to look over George again.

"People make awful speculations about things that are none of their business, I know how bad it feels to be the subject of them." George stares ahead of himself, not blinking, not moving any of his features in the slightest. "Jen suggested I was cheating on my husband with you, rumours like that, they—they can really jeopardise people's trust in you." He barely notices his own vulnerability as he speaks, only sparked by George finally meeting his eyes.

"How can you even solve this? People will talk no matter what," he says. The strain in his voice would make Dream believe he's holding back on a much more emotional response than he's giving. Twisted morality blooms inside Dream's thoughts.

"We could pretend a little longer," Dream answers, unfairly. He would be lying, even to himself, if he said this plan was only fuelled by the need to get rid of the rumours. But before he can even elaborate, George is already huffing and shaking his head.

"No."

"You come back to the office like nothing happened, we wear rings and let people take pictures for a few weeks, and then we announce our divorce. We'd have to keep up the act for another while, but I think it's the best—"

"I said no!" George interrupts, rising from the couch just to pace around the room, having Dream's wide eyes look up at him. "I'm not doing that, I can't," he adds, shakier than before. The pang

Dream feels in his chest is unfamiliar. Whether it be a balloon of hope popped by a needle, or harsh reality simply catching up to him, it's an unwelcome feeling, all because it completely eliminates the possibility of something *real*.

The rotten intentions with which he had asked George to be part of his plan surface again, and Sunday's realisations boom through his mind. The small stab to his feelings only solidifies his own running speculations; *he's into George*.

"You can't?" He repeats, pushing his hurt back to a dark corner of his mind.

"I can't, Dream, I just can't." Dream watches as George runs his hands down his face, before staring at the ceiling. "You'll have to think of something else, I'm not doing that." He has to swallow the lump that's formed in his throat before it gets the best of him.

"Why not?" His voice is small, smaller than he'd like, and it catches George's attention. A tensed silence fills the room, and George seems to go over what to answer inside his head. Judging by his initial aversion, Dream guesses the reason must be harsher than he'd want it to be. But there's nothing left to lose, anyway.

"I—," George starts, breath seemingly catching in his throat a little bit. "I don't think I can say," he whispers.

"You can say," Dream counters, but he recognises how unconvincing it must sound.

"No, I really don't think I can, it'd just make it more complicated than it already is," George answers, shaking his head again. He sits back down, folding his hands into his lap.

"It's already more complicated than you probably think it is," Dream utters. It's his turn to run his hands across his face, and there's a sharp little voice in the back of his head urging him to just confess. It's the scariest little voice he's ever heard, and the idea of a statement as permanent as what he's considering makes him want to run to the toilet and just throw up.

Yes, it would wipe the confusion, but it'd also expose his own inhumanity. The fucked up morals he has, for convincing George to do something only for him to feel good about, not considering the repercussions it might have. Because let's face it, if he had been neutral, if it was all for the reasons he told George it was for, he might have seen these consequences coming. But is keeping it from him any more fair?

What holds him back most from simply blurting it out, is what it'd mean for how their night ended. If there were no feelings involved, if it was all a spur of the moment and the excitement of success leading them to where they ended up, in the supply closet, craving something sexual in mere celebration, it would be somewhat okay-ish. It wouldn't be perfect, by any means, it's not something Dream just *does*, but it'd be less heavy.

Once it becomes clear Dream went in with more feelings than he has ever exposed to having, it'd be more than reasonable for George to question his intentions in that very moment alone. Yes, his intentions would be questioned all over, the entire night could become subject to speculation and blame, but the last thing he wants is for George to think he expected *that* to come from it. That he went in expecting a sexual favour to soothe his sick mind, to have George at his mercy, because it's his way of getting what he wants. He knows how it would sound, he realises it's a fair accusation, but it's still far from the truth, and he knows that's an impossible thing to convince George of.

"I don't think I'd be welcome at work anymore at all, if I tell you," George then says, distracting

Dream from his own mind-prison.

“Whatever it is, I don’t think I can judge you for it,” he answers. After all, George’s reasons can’t be much worse than his own.

“Okay,” George breathes. Dream looks over to see his hands tighten in his lap, squeezing his own palms as he sighs. “I can’t do it because... because it wouldn’t pretending,” he says.

“You— huh?” Dream brings out, intelligently.

“Maybe it’s pretend for you, and I get that, it was all for that important deal, and I agreed to those conditions, but it’s— I’m—,” he stutters, slowly breaking down right where he sits next to Dream on the worn grey couch. “I’d be enjoying it too much, and I’d hope it’s secretly not pretend from your side either even though it is, and I know very well that it is, and I’d just— I’d hurt myself in believing something unreal is real and having it crash down on me when inevitably we’d have to put a stop to it,” he rambles on, voice getting more unstable with every sentence he speaks. “I’d be putting up unfair expectations, and I’d probably blame you for them not coming true, which is so fucking unfair and resentful and just too much, it’s too much,” he ends, a choked sound wracking through his voice in between his last words. And all Dream can do is stare.

He should say something. He really should say something. He should be talking the tears away from George’s eyes, soothe him, tell him he has nothing to worry about, but his mind is frozen and so is his body, shock putting a halt to all logically functioning systems inside of his brain.

All he does is breathe. The storm that went on inside his head just moments prior has moved itself to George, and now he sits in the calm that remains afterwards. He wants to assess the damage, but it’s difficult to calculate what’s gone wrong, when George just confessed to liking him back. Maybe the only damage is what he’s doing now by not speaking, leaving George in doubt and fearful vulnerability. *Oh fuck, he still hasn’t spoken.*

“I like you,” he blurts out. It breaks the silence, because even though George was crying, he did it too quietly to fill the room with anything other than the heavy lack of sound.

“What do you mean?” George sounds nasal as he responds, wiping the back of his hand across his eyes.

“That I like you— I’m into you,” Dream answers. The fact he was able to pick those words from the jumble that’s become his mind is something quite the miracle, and he swallows away what was left of his own doubt. Before he continues, he turns his head to meet George’s puffy-rimmed eyes and red-shaded nose. “When I said it’s more complicated than you probably thought, that’s what I meant. That I like you.”

George’s crying slows down to sporadic sniffs, his breathing regulating as their eyes stay met. Even though Dream wants to say more, he wants to provide more of an explanation to his statement, he can’t find any words that fit well in the situation provided. Instead, he takes one of the hands residing in George’s lap, ushering it out of the other’s own hold, and stares down at it as he plays with the slim fingers.

“So...” George says, but falters, seemingly recollecting himself before he can speak again. “So it wasn’t all pretend for you, either,” he states more than asks, but Dream nods anyway, not looking away from George’s hand inside his own.

“It wasn’t. I think at first, I just pushed it down, because I didn’t even know what I was dealing with, and when I realised, I tried to convince myself it was fake, but it really wasn’t. That just feels

really stupid now,” he says. George lets his hand be played with as he takes it in, and Dream can see him slowly nod.

“Then, uhm,” George starts. It causes for Dream to look up, yet not letting go of the hand. “Then maybe, just... tell people it was a misunderstanding, that you don’t actually have a husband,” he continues, and Dream’s heart drops together with his gaze. *He still doesn’t want to pretend.* So, Dream nods.

“Yeah,” he whispers, defeatedly.

“Tell them you have, ehm, a boyfriend?”

As quick as it sank, Dream’s heart leaps back up, and he meets George’s gaze again. “A boyfriend?” He parrots.

George nods. “If you want one, at least. Or— if you want me to be your boyfriend, I mean,” he adds, but the smile slowly pulling on Dream’s lips has to be enough of a confirmation.

“I’d like that, yeah,” he answers, in case his facial features didn’t spill his excitement about it yet. George snuffles once more before he can stretch his mouth into a smile as well, and while Dream takes a stronger grip on his palm, he leans forward. The motion is mimicked, George carefully approaching as well, his eyes slipping shut on the way. In the last moment before their lips meet, Dream makes an effort to *really* look.

His dark eyes are hidden, but his dark hair is just the same, right the way he’d imagined his husband’s to be. He sees every little perfection and imperfection spread over George’s face, from the way his eyelashes perch down perfectly, to the tiny imperfect dips in his nose. Up close, his lips look like an ideal pillow to his own, and right as his eyes start hesitating, blinking open, Dream presses down.

He lets his eyelids fall, unable to see whether George closes his again too, but all that matters is the touch of plush pink to his mouth. It’s not all that passionate, it’s not releasing held back energy or cravings, it’s too soft to be hungry, but it’s right. It’s the exact way it should be, when you feel each other’s closeness truly for the first time.

Nothing goes quickly, not the movement of lips against lips or two bodies moving in closer to each other. Everything takes its sweet, sweet time in developing, from the way George opens up to let Dream’s tongue explore him further, to hands roaming over still under-explored areas of body where touch just becomes that bit more craved.

Once Dream’s hands find their way up George’s thighs, hooking onto his waist, the passion starts spilling. Mouths hardly close as movements become quicker, and breath is barely there anymore despite the light gasps that George releases against Dream’s lips.

Dream only breaks the kiss to softly mumble, “do you want to finish what we started?”

“God, yes,” George breathes, both their eyes fluttering open for a moment to glance at each other. The next initiative comes from George, nearly launching himself forward to clash their lips together again. It could have been seconds, it could have minutes, Dream wouldn’t know as time gets lost between two bodies getting impossibly closer to each other. And when George’s lips move back, he chases right after them, until their horizontal position forces him to climb onto the couch with his knees, George’s hips right between them. *Where they should be.*

“Here?” Dream breathes as he lifts off for a moment. The redness that used to only be on George’s

nose has blossomed on his cheeks, lips even more cherry-coloured from the force with which they expressed eagerness. His eyes get less red and puffy as the only trace of crying is the dried up tears beneath them. Before George can answer, before his pretty mouth can speak any even prettier words, Dream dips down to kiss the salty remnants of his emotions away. The emotions that, somehow, like a twisted universe, they happened to share. Fate is funny like that.

“Here, now, please,” George nearly whispers. Like it’s a secret. Like *they* are the secret. Like a secret that’s broken in two, and both of them got half settled in their brains, only to be pieced together *right now*.

“Anything you want, princess,” Dream answers, low with timbre. An immediate reaction occurs, one he hadn’t seen coming. While George’s lips drop apart just a little, his hips thrust up. Dream can’t decipher if it’s a voluntary movement, or if George has just spilled yet another secret to him. “Something you liked?” Mischievous, teasing, but only to figure out if it was the nickname. He could use that kind of knowledge.

“Your voice— you— *fuck*, Dream,” George nearly moans. By now, Dream figures it’s time to rid himself of his jacket, throwing it to the floor without much care of where it lands. George follows the movement of his body with his eyes, lips still apart like they’re ready to release something more. His hand suddenly finds a hold on Dream’s tie, pulling it just harsh enough to make Dream give in and bend over him again. Their mouths are only inches away yet again, and while George’s inspect a pair of lips in front of him, he says, “I like the way you talk to me, boss.”

Involuntary. It’s definitely without intention that it’s Dream’s hips thrusting down now, rubbing their crotches together in a spark of unexpected interest. An abrupt sigh leaves his mouth with it, and George’s eyes fill themselves with satisfaction. *So it counts for the both of them.*

They don’t need to discuss it, simply reconnecting lips and tongues, and this time, clothed crotches as well. They rub together like there’s something that needs to escape, that’s simply begging to be let out with its last dying breath. Dream feels it in every fibre of his body, and the way his shoes and both his and George’s socks have been kicked off feels like magic. Like a skip in time, their shirts follow, until all that’s left are pants and underwear.

Lips find themselves connected for long enough, when Dream takes his off again. They plant down on an expanse of skin below, the first kiss there accompanied by a hand undoing George’s button further down. He wishes he could see the way George’s jaw drops as a skilled mouth sucks purple into pale, leaving one hell of a memory before he moves down. With the second kiss, George’s zipper comes undone, and the back of Dream’s hand brushes against the bulge that immediately becomes more apparent.

“God,” George breathes, hardly audible, but enough for Dream to stir his stomach with some type of... *nerves*. A feeling he vaguely recognises from love that’s long past, reborn in the words and actions of George. Something that makes him want to jump and squeal from excitement, but instead makes him moan out softly against the other’s neck, drawn out and long overdue.

With the third kiss, Dream’s hands have gotten a grip on George’s waistband, pulling it down under perfect guidance from dainty hands. They move over to Dream’s own, unbuckling and undoing, pulling down and pulling off. Both pairs of pants land somewhere near the previously discarded shirts, and all that’s left is two thin layers of boxers.

Something impatient takes over, and whereas Dream would normally take his sweet time teasing and getting the other worked up, he can’t find it in himself to wait. Not today. Only for a moment does he let his palm running over the head that’s poking out from elastic waistband. He’s met with an immediate gasp, the perfect opportunity to take away George’s breath even further by kissing

him almost fatally passionately. Maybe because it leaves George without a spare huff of air in his lungs, maybe because it leaves Dream's heart beating harder than it probably should. The elastic band loses function as Dream pulls it down, his own following, until they're just two naked bodies on George's worn couch.

"You... are captivating," Dream whispers as he grants George the chance to breathe. Latter heaves, eyes drowsily looking up with the full intent of enchantment, of putting a love spell on Dream he could never rid himself of. And it works. He's captured. His mind is captured, his eyes are captured, the rest of his body is captured. George has hijacked his entire being, becoming nothing more than a mind wanting to please.

"So are you," George responds. "Even more now that you're on top of me." The last part sounds like another secret. One that Dream doesn't want to share with anyone. Himself, George's body between his legs, the air in the room heating up, nothing anyone should know but them. Something else only meant for George's eyes, is Dream's fingers reaching up to his own face, prying themselves between raw lips to coat them in the quickest lubricant he can think of. Spit nearly drips from them as he releases them, George looking mesmerised.

"That okay?" Dream questions quickly. The answer is a quick nod and a readjustment of George's hips, lifting them just a little to clear the space.

"Please," he answers. And before Dream can even think of swimming, of trying not to drown in everything that George is and does, his finger circles George's tight rim. Heavy breaths make him relax, and when his body is ready, Dream naturally finds his finger drawn in. Followed by George throwing his head back and closing his eyes, his finger pushes further, exploring the boundaries which George's body holds.

It starts going faster, deeper, making George writhe in wrecked pleasure until he asks for more. *Demands* more. And who is Dream to deny? A change of pace, it is, from his usual own bossiness, his own leadership. He might be the one giving, but he's only giving exactly what George asks him to give. So when he says to add another finger, Dream does. When he moans '*harder*', he obliges, and roughens it up. And when George demands more than just three fingers inside of him, Dream spits in his palm and prepares himself to commit fully.

The stroke of his own hand makes him shiver for a moment, all thoughts jumbled from the sudden pleasure of the movement. Three seconds to recollect, before he positions himself between George's legs wide open, welcoming him like his body is home and dinner has been ready for hours.

George reaches out his hand when Dream leans in with his upper body, finally perching on the back of his neck. He pulls him down, as if he wants to whisper something in Dream's ear, but he stops once they're close enough to smell each other's breath. And like he was meant to do so, Dream pushes his tip in while their eyes stay focussed on each other. George's lose their clarity quickly though, eyelids fluttering at the sensation.

Dream inhales sharply, at the sight and at the feeling, combining into bliss. He dares push in further, little by little, intently watching what it does to George while breathing out his own grunts. The otherworldly man looks like he's up in the clouds, floating above everything as he processes the shift from pain to pleasure. Dream takes great care in moving as carefully as possible, even though his own feelings nearly drive him to pick his own pace. George's sounds, the feeling of his falls clenching around Dream's cock, it tells him exactly what to do, until they've made a steady pace for themselves.

Back to earth, George's eyes regain their liveliness, staying fixed as his mouth hangs open. With

the rhythmic *slap, slap, slap*, of skin to skin, heat of one body mixing with the other and the drag of tightness around Dream's length, he finds it hard to keep in control of his own sounds. Luckily, George joins him in the symphony, moans spilling freely, as they should.

"You're so fucking pretty," Dream manages to say, before deciding to open attack on George's lips again. The whimper he gets in return and the arms tightening around his neck are enough confirmation it went well received. Legs hook themselves around him, pulling him in further until there's nothing left but being as deeply connected as possible.

With one particular drag, George almost fucking *screams*, and there's perfect satisfaction in the idea Dream has gotten the right angle. He does it again, and again, and again, until the bundle of nerves is abused into incoherent babbles and loosened arms above. The movement of his skin, George's expressiveness, the sheer heat building up, it's driving Dream down a one way road of which the end is definitely nearing. It feels like going way past the speed limit, in the dark, when nobody else is on the road. The exhilarating feeling of doing *whatever the fuck you want*, never getting caught. It builds a long forgotten feeling in Dream's stomach, one he recognises as being so close to orgasm he could go insane if he got stuck on it for too long.

He knows what he needs. And he knows what to do to get it. His hand slithers in between them, finding a wet tip to swipe his thumb across, sending an instant reaction tumbling from George's vocal cords. His palms moves around; over the tip, under it, massaging, and finally, stroking. He jerks his wrist like the future of the world depends on it, George having lost all of his vocal capabilities. All that's left is strained noise from his throat, his back arching and his pleasure overtaking. George comes with a drawn out moan, his eyes rolling back while his body jerks. His walls clench, and Dream recognises the exact thing he had been aiming for.

Driven by some sort of animalistic urge, he snaps his hips faster, chasing after a release for himself as well before he sends George into overstimulation. His drags feel particularly right, and the feeling building up in his stomach blooms into his orgasm, releasing and pumping white back into George. Dream huffs, eyes screwed shut, thrusting out his orgasm in bliss while George continues to softly moan him through it.

When both have finally come down from the high, George jerks Dream down to collapse on top of him. Small hands rest on Dream's sweaty back, still huffing, still inside.

"I'm gonna make a mess of your couch if I pull out now," Dream mumbles into the damp skin of George's shoulder, making no effort to move whatsoever.

"It's fine, I can clean it later," George chuckles. Dream decides not to pay too much mind to it as he pulls out, getting a chance to fully reflect on exactly what has happened. Or, what is happening right now.

Because right now, he is naked on top of George. Post-orgasm. Because confessions led to sex on a couch in a living room that isn't Dream's. And now, he is catching his breath while George gently scratching his back for him. In exactly the right place. With exactly blunt enough nails. As if he just *knows*.

"So are you gonna tell them you have a boyfriend?" George then says, making Dream laugh quietly into his skin. He lifts himself up just enough to catch the glimmer in George's eyes, like some sort of revelation has come to him.

"Only if you do as well," he answers. George smiles warmly, then nods, then smiles even wider. Dream feels like he could melt. "That's settled then."

“So maybe we should clean up and get back to work, before all hell breaks loose,” George suggests.

“Yeah, probably.”

Though Dream stays in his arms for just a few minutes longer. Absorbs his warmth just that little bit more, And lets the absurdity of it all settle down for a moment, before he can find the motivation to get up. Because absurd, it is. Making your pretend-husband your real boyfriend. Work of angels, he argues as he gets up and looks down at the beauty on the couch. Absurd.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for being patient with me, I love you :) <3

End Notes

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